

# WHAT HAVE PETILIA SATURNINA AND FIRMUS TOLD US BETWEEN THE LINES? TWO UNPUBLISHED INSCRIPTIONS FROM TROGIR CITY MUSEUM

## *S u m m a r y*

The inscriptional heritage of Hellenistic Tragourion and Roman Tragurium didn't provide us the expected epigraphic profile so far. From this city we have less than a hundred inscriptions preserved and many of them were found used as a building material in later phases of the Trogir's urban development. From the Late Antiquity period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we can trace the reuse of the Roman stone material in the houses, palaces and churches in Trogir, which leads to the conclusion that many inscriptions are still incorporated in the fundaments below the city's walking surface. Thus, with the next salvage archaeological excavations in the city centre we can hope that some of them will be found.

The paper deals with two unpublished Roman epigraphic monuments, one sepulchral and one votive inscription. The first one is erected for Petilius Saturus who was commemorated by his freedwoman Petilia Saturnina and which can be dated from the second part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the first part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The second one is an altar dedicated by some Firmus to an unknown deity, since its upper part is not preserved. The altar is rather difficult to date, but we think it was erected in the second part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Although there are not some spectacular information mentioned on these monuments, they provide us several peculiarities given through their appearance as well as the orthography and grammar of the inscriptions. Namely, the sepulchral monument seems to be the unfinished piece made in a quality workshop, but the lack of the ornaments in its upper part points to the assumption that Petilia Saturnina didn't have enough resources to cover the cost of a finished monument. To strengthen this hypothesis, we don't find the usual information (for this type of tombstone) about the years of life of the deceased. Furthermore, his nomen was carved as P, and reconstructed after Petilia's name who was his freedwoman and who inherited his family name after the manumission. All this could decrease the costs of the monument, but at the same time maintain the decency and highlight all the information that mattered. On the altar, which seems to be a bit roughly-made monument, apart from the disorganized inscription space and unevenly carved letters, there is erroneously engraved word posuit instead of posuit. This implies that Firmus could make this altar with his hands and didn't care for the lapse he made. Also, if Firmus was a customer, it could be that the inexperienced stone-cutter was rather illiterate who wasn't aware of his mistake, and neither was Firmus. There is also an option that he got the altar on a discounted price, in spite of the inaccuracy. In the analysis of these two monuments, all the above mentioned assumptions and questions are related to the social status of the

lower strata of Roman society, the level of their literacy and financial background. We can presume that both of the customers paid less for the monuments like these, since there are several evidences that can lead us to that conclusion. No matter how incomplete and raw the tombstone and the altar were, the most important is that these monuments obviously accomplished their purpose in antiquity. If the first monument had been completed and if the inscription of the second monument had been accurately carved, we wouldn't have been provided with this minor insight into everyday life of the poorer population.

*Key words:* Trogir, Tragurium, Roman era, epigraphy, stone carving, freedmen, onomastics.